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ABSTRACT

Intended for 4-H participants who plan and implement activities in the area of child development, this booklet provides a study guide to help young learners: (1) gain understanding of a preschool child's physical, mental, social, and emotional growth; (2) learn to care for a preschooler and promote preschoolers' feelings of security and safety; and (3) choose types of play that preschoolers enjoy. Suggested projects; information about preschoolers' development; an observation form; guidelines on communicating with and caring for preschoolers; ways to help preschoolers learn through play; and guidelines for evaluating toys are provided. Sources of additional help with programs are listed. A "leader's guide" for both the preschooler and middle childhood units is appended. (RH)

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Nebraska Cooperative Extension 4-H 325

# 4-H CHILD DEVELOPMENT

# THE PRESCHOOLER

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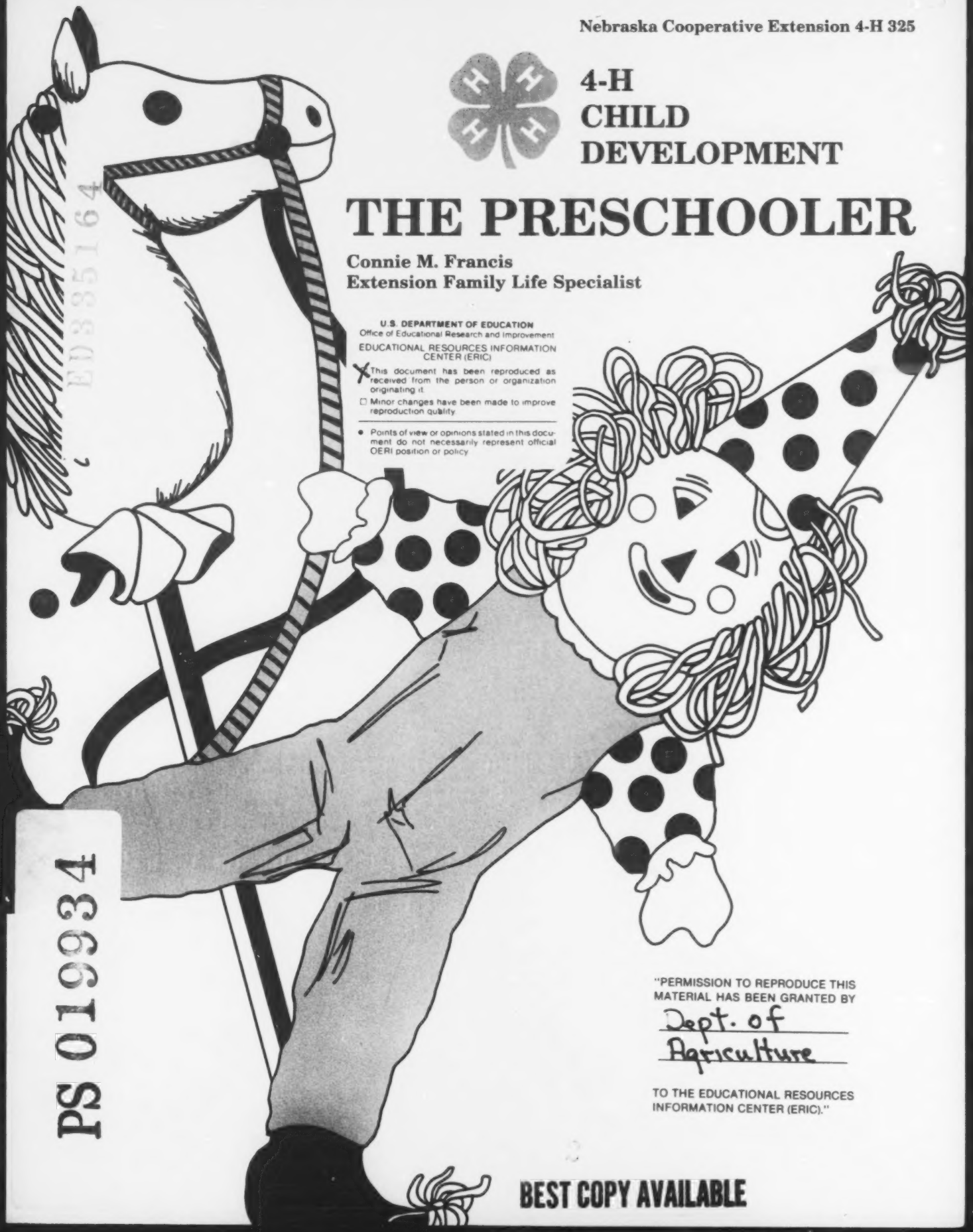

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# The Preschooler: 4-H Child Development

## Project Planning and Evaluation Sheet

Name_____Age (Jan.1)_____ Year_____

Years in 4-H_____ Name of Club_____

Signature of Leader or Parent_____

| I plan to do these activities: | From this activity I learned: | Comments: |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | | |
| 2 | | |
| 3 | | |
| 4 | | |
| 5 | | |
| 6 | | |

Presentations or community service activities:

# THE PRESCHOOLER
## 4-H Child Development Project

**Connie M. Francis**
**Extension Family Life Specialist**

Welcome to the 4-H Child Development Project. This project is written in four separate parts:

**The Infant (Birth to 18 months)**

**The Toddler (18 months to 3 years)**

**The Preschooler (3 to 6 years)**

**Middle Childhood (6 to 8 years)**

You have chosen to study the preschooler. The objectives of this unit are to:

- Develop an understanding of how a preschooler grows physically, mentally, socially and emotionally.
- Learn how to care for a preschooler and promote feelings of security and safety.
- Choose types of play a preschooler enjoys.

The amount of responsibility you have for caring for a child in this project depends on your age. Your age also will determine how you will study the preschooler you are watching. The next page has some ideas about what you may do in this project.

# PROJECT SUGGESTIONS 1

**9-11 years old**

Because you are very young, we suggest you do not take a babysitting job to complete this project. You may choose to observe and help with your preschool brother or sister, or another preschooler you know. You will feel more at ease having an adult present while learning about the preschooler.

In this project you may choose some of these activities:

- Select a story a preschooler will enjoy. Make something to help tell the story. It might be a puppet, picture book, flannelboard, etc. Following the story, plan a simple art project that relates to the story you told.
- With a parent's permission, take a preschooler on a nature walk, discussing things you see.
- Teach a preschooler a simple game, fingerplay or song.
- Prepare a snack with a preschooler and observe eating habits.
- Help a preschooler get ready for bed by planning a restful activity before the child goes to sleep.

In a notebook or journal, write down what you learn about preschoolers as you observe and do the activities in the project.

**12-14 years old**

If you and your parents feel you are capable of taking care of a preschooler by yourself, you may babysit as you complete this project.

You may select activities from the suggestions for 9- to 11-year-olds. Other ideas include:

- Watch a preschooler playing alone and with a group of children. Write a short story about what you observe.
- Prepare a preschooler's breakfast. Along with the breakfast, plan the child's menus for the rest of the day.



- Make a simple toy or piece of furniture for a preschooler.

Keep a notebook or journal in which you write down what you learn about preschoolers as you do the activities you have selected and as you observe preschoolers.

**15-19 years old**

You may select activities from the suggestions for 9- to 11-year-olds and 12- to 14-year-olds. Additional ideas include:

- Prepare a preschooler's meal, including a new food the preschooler has not tasted before. Observe the child's reaction to the new food.
- Compare three to five preschoolers you know. Make a chart showing how they differ physically.
- Look into possible jobs in the child care area. Interview a child care provider, preschool teacher, pediatrician, or other professional who works with children to learn more about the job they do.

Keep a journal of things you learn about preschoolers as you complete this project.

# UNDERSTANDING THE PRESCHOOLER 2

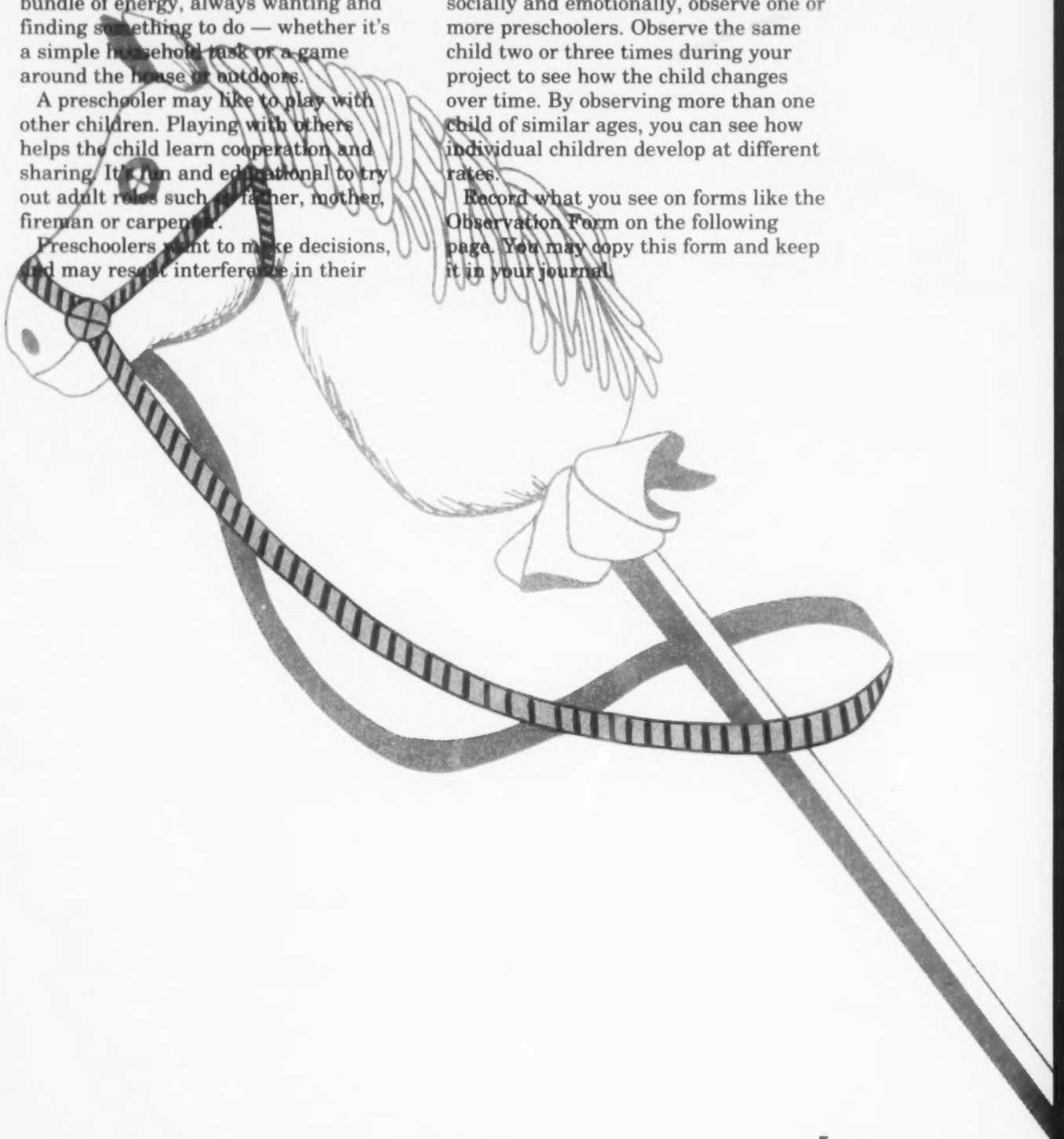
In a world full of adventure and imagination, a preschooler is busy from dawn to dusk. A preschooler is a bundle of energy, always wanting and finding something to do — whether it's a simple household task or a game around the house or outdoors.

A preschooler may like to play with other children. Playing with others helps the child learn cooperation and sharing. It's fun and educational to try out adult roles such as father, mother, fireman or carpenter.

Preschoolers want to make decisions, and may resent interference in their play and with their possessions.

To help you understand how a preschooler develops mentally, physically, socially and emotionally, observe one or more preschoolers. Observe the same child two or three times during your project to see how the child changes over time. By observing more than one child of similar ages, you can see how individual children develop at different rates.

Record what you see on forms like the Observation Form on the following page. You may copy this form and keep it in your journal.



# PRESCHOOLER OBSERVATION FORM

Name of Child Observed _____ Date _____

Age_____Boy_____Girl_____Weight_____pounds; Height_____inches

*(Write YES or NO in each blank.)*

**Physical Development**

_____runs
_____jumps
_____skips
_____stands on tiptoes
_____rides a tricycle
_____kicks a ball
_____goes up stairs (tell how_____
_____ )
_____plays simple games
____sleeps well (how long?_____)
____has clear, bright eyes
____uses hands skillfully
____eats well with tableware
____has teeth (how many?_____)

**Social Development**

_____friendly to you
_____friendly to strangers
_____plays with other children
_____can take turns
_____is a leader
_____can share with others
_____likes other children
____likes pets
_____plays well alone
_____is a follower

**Mental Development**

_____notices people
_____speaks clearly
_____uses sentences
_____likes books
_____asks questions
_____can learn games
_____can share with others
_____imitates grown-up life in play
_____likes to explore, experiment
_____has short attention span (less than 5 minutes)
_____has long attention span (10 minutes or longer)

**Emotional Development**

_____overall a happy child
_____afraid of new experiences
_____afraid of the dark
_____afraid of dogs
_____afraid of strangers
_____cries when parents leave
_____shows love to pets, dolls, stuffed toys
_____shows signs of jealousy
_____gets angry quickly
_____has temper tantrums
_____can wait for attention
____shows pleasure with attention
_____craves attention
_____seems secure
_____resists authority

If you have additional comments about any of the observations above, record them in your journal.

# TALKING TO PRESCHOOLERS

The way you say and do things tells a child how you feel. A child will react to your feelings more than to your words. Your voice and actions should tell the child you are a friend.

A first impression is very important to a preschooler. Give the child time to look you over. A child's curiosity plus your smile usually will lead to a friendship.

Preschoolers will be guided by your words, so choose them carefully. Use the word "do" rather than "don't." "Don't" tells the child only what cannot be done. A preschooler needs to be told what can be done and where it can be done.

Instead of saying "Don't run in the house," say "If you want to run, you can go outside and run around the house." The child's urge to run is still satisfied.

Whenever possible, give a child encouragement and approval. Say, "Sue finished the puzzle," or "Billy tied his shoes like an expert."

Give a preschooler a choice only when it is easy to make a decision. A choice between two or three things is best for this age.

Never offer a choice when something has to be done. Say "It's time to rest," rather than "Do you want to rest now?" Chances are the answer to that question will be "no."

Avoid bribing or forcing a child to do anything. "Eat your vegetables or you won't get any ice cream" does not encourage a child to eat and like vegetables.

# I AM A PRESCHOOLER

Being a preschooler is an adventuresome time for me. This is how I grow:*

**When I am 3 years old, I like to:**

- walk upstairs using alternate feet
- ride a tricycle with pedals
- imitate drawings made by other people
- speak three- to five-word sentences
- undress myself and wash myself
- do some things without my parents' help
- be aggressive with other children
- color with crayons
- put on my own shoes
- say a few rhymes

**When I am 4 years old, I like to:**

- play "pretend" with my toys and use my imagination
- skip on one foot
- brag a lot and talk a lot
- be friends with other children
- spread butter and jam on my bread
- wash and dry my face and hands without help
- count a few objects
- visit the neighbors
- play well with other children
- make my parents and other adults happy

**When I am five years old, I like to:**

- count a few more objects
- imitate simple drawings
- put my toys away
- print my own name
- cut things out with my scissors
- play games with a group of boys and girls
- balance on the sidewalk curb
- skip, using feet alternately
- name a penny, nickel and dime

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*Each child is unique and will proceed through these stages at his or her own rate. The ages given here are approximate ages for each skill.

# CARING FOR THE PRESCHOOLER 3

### Feeding the Preschooler

Happy mealtimes help children develop good eating habits. With cheerful people around them and attractive, tasty meals, life may seem quite secure at mealtime.

A preschooler's appetite may change from meal to meal. A child is likely to be a fussy eater when overly tired, excited, in a strange place, or if a routine has been upset. If there has been active play, it is a good idea to have a quiet time before coming to the table. Reading a book or looking at a magazine may help the child relax. It also may be quieting to lay on the floor and look out the window at trees or the sky.

Don't force a preschooler to eat food he or she does not want or like. Offer only one new food at a time and give only a very small helping.

Let the child judge when he or she is done eating. Allow enough time to eat what is wanted (30 minutes is enough) and then remove the food from the table. By this time a child has decided to eat or not to eat.

If a child gets hungry between meals, provide nutritious snacks, but be sure snacks do not interfere with mealtime.

The preschooler's daily nutritional needs include:

1. Milk and Cheese group — two to three cups of milk (other dairy products may replace some of the milk).

2. Meat, Fish, Poultry and Beans Group — two to three small servings. A serving for a preschooler equals 1 ounce of meat, poultry or fish, 1 egg, 2 tablespoons peanut butter, or 1/3 cup cooked dry beans, peas, or other legumes.

3. Fruit and Vegetable Group — four or more servings are recommended (one serving of citrus fruits, one of dark green or deep yellow vegetables, plus two other vegetable and fruit servings.) A serving for preschoolers equals 1/2 cup juice , 1/3 cup fruit or vegetable, 1/2 piece of medium fruit or one whole small fruit.

4. Cereal and Bread Group — four or more servings are recommended. A serving for a preschooler equals 1/2 slice of bread, 1/4 to 1/3 cup cooked or dry cereal, or 1/4 to 1/3 cup cooked rice or pasta.

Here are some general rules to help a child enjoy good food:

- Serve the food in an attractive, eye-catching manner but do not "doctor up" the food so the child doesn't recognize its original taste.
- Give small helpings. Children can ask for seconds if they want.
- Allow the child to use his or her fingers but encourage the use of a spoon. You may begin talking about table manners.
- Maintain a calm, cheerful atmosphere. Avoid mealtime arguments and scoldings.
- Leave the radio, television and stereo off during mealtime.

### Clothing the Preschooler

At ages 4 and 5, a preschooler can dress and undress with little assistance, especially if clothes are loose-fitting and have only a few simple closures. You still may need to help tie shoes and button difficult openings.

Besides learning how to dress, a preschool child also needs to learn
— how to hang up clothes,
— how to keep clothes fairly clean, and
— how to keep clothes on.

Teach the child to choose the right

clothes for an activity by telling how certain clothing is used. Say "mittens for cold," or "bare hands for summer." This helps a child relate clothes to the situation. Too often children catch colds or chill their bare hands because they have not been taught to dress properly for outdoors.

Because a preschooler is very active, clothes need to be loose and comfortable, and not hinder movements. Clothes that hang from the shoulders rather than being fitted at the waist are good for the active child.

Clothes that can be put on and taken off easily and are easily managed at the toilet give the child a chance to be self-sufficient. This builds self-confidence and independence, and improves muscle coordination.

Self-help clothes

—have simple openings: elastic waistbands, large buttons or zipper pulls, gripper strip fasteners,

—are well-marked so the child knows the difference between front and back,

—have elastic at fitted areas, and

—are simple in design.

Preschoolers' clothing is purchased by size and not by age of the child. Here are the standard measurements most manufacturers use for preschoolers' clothing:

| SIZE | HEIGHT INCHES | WEIGHT POUNDS |
|---|---|---|
| 2 | 34 | 29 |
| 3 | 37 | 34 |
| 4 | 40 | 38 |
| 5 | 43 | 44 |
| 6 | 46 | 49 |
| 6x | 48 | 54 |

**Preschooler's Bedtime**

A preschooler's bedtime should be a happy time. This makes the difference between a child who goes to bed willingly and the child who delays and argues.

To eliminate last minute stalling, remind the child about one-half hour in advance that it soon will be bedtime. Try not to rush the process of going to bed, unless the child is definitely stalling.

The smaller preschooler loves to be carried affectionately to bed in your arms. The older preschooler can be led by the hand while you chat about things that will happen tomorrow.

If time allows, tell or read a story to the child. The story should have a happy, peaceful ending that leaves restful thoughts in the child's mind.

Some children enjoy having a small stuffed animal or other favorite toy in bed with them. Usually these toys are soft and cuddly. A child may have a special blanket to sleep with. Check with the parents about toys and blankets the child will want at bedtime. Without these things, the child may fuss and cry.

Older preschoolers probably will have outgrown the stage of bringing toys to bed with them.

A preschooler needs an average of 11 to 12 hours of sleep a night. Although some still nap during the day, most of them need just a rest period.

# LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

A preschooler spends a large part of his or her day playing. Play is one way to learn about oneself and the surrounding world. Through trial and error, the preschooler learns new skills.

Play provides an outlet for excess energy and an opportunity for the child to practice physical skills. It also promotes good appetite and healthful sleep.

There are several types of play:

—Active play includes running, jumping, playing active games or throwing a ball.

—Quiet play may be things like reading a storybook, making something out of clay or doing a fingerplay.

Several types of play are discussed in the following pages. Try some of these activities with a preschooler.

**Imaginative Play**

At ages 4 and 5, imaginative play almost crowds out the real world. Preschoolers will spend hours and hours acting out adult roles. This is their way of learning what these roles are like. They also are learning to express themselves by acting out their ideas and feelings. At this age, preschoolers are very inventive.

Through play, a child masters many skills. For example, Johnny and Sue are playing carpenter. They are building houses in an imaginary town. Through make-believe, they are learning to hammer nails and to ride the tricycle from one imaginary house to another.

A good toy for a preschooler is one that appeals to the child's imagination; it can be used in many ways and for many things. An old purse, a fireman's hat, a small toy animal, play money and a doll buggy are toys that develop a child's imagination. Dress-up costumes make play seem even more realistic.

At ages 5 and 6, children recognize that this type of play is pretend. Those children who still confuse reality with make-believe must be reminded that they are just pretending.

**Nature Hike**

A fun way to teach a preschooler about the world is to go on a nature hike. As you walk through the back yard or nearby park, look at the clouds, peek under rocks, and point out bird nests and other interesting things in nature.

Have the child bring along a paper sack for collecting items on the hike. Parents will enjoy seeing what was found and learning about each thing.

If the hike is around [illegible] morning or midafternoon, pack a simple snack to carry along. It may be an apple, or some crackers and cheese. Preschoolers enjoy eating lunch outdoors.

Play "touch and feel" while you are walking on your nature hike. As the child picks things up, ask if they are soft or hard, cool or warm, smooth or rough, light or heavy. Here are some things in nature that the child can touch and tell you about:

SOFT - grass, feather, fuzzy caterpillar, kitten

HARD - rock, sidewalk, stick

LIGHT - leaf, feather

HEAVY - [illegible]

COOL - shade, water, ice

WARM - sun, skin

ROUGH - rock, bark on tree, pine cone

SMOOTH - leaf, your skin

See if you can find other things to add to this list.

Take a trip to a zoo, pet show or animal farm where a child can see many different kinds of animals, birds, insects and fish. Watch carefully so the animals are not accidentally scratched or hurt.

**Telling a Story**

Preschoolers will listen to 10 to 20 minute stories about animals and children. They also enjoy comic books and humorous characters. Stories that give human qualities to cars, trains, etc. also are popular with preschoolers.

Select stories that involve the imagination but avoid those that are so "make-believe" they confuse the child. Stories with ghosts and witches may frighten some children.

Realistic stories also are good for a preschooler because they help him or her learn about the world.

Preschoolers enjoy

—stories about themselves and their play activities,

—stories about things that move and make noises (such as choo-choo trains, cows that moo, tugboats that go putt-putt),

—stories that repeat lines over and over again (like "I'll huff and I'll puff and I'll blow your house down"), and

—stories that have large, simple, colorful pictures.

Here are some suggestions for telling stories to a child:

•Be sure the child is seated in a comfortable spot. Sit facing the child so he or she can see your facial expressions as you tell the story.

•Tell the story slowly and allow for questions and comments as you go.

•Try to include only one subject in the story or the child will lose interest.

•As you read or tell the story use a lot of expression in your face and voice. This will entertain and help the child learn to use face and voice in expressing himself or herself.

•Allow the child to leave before the story is finished. Try telling it again later in the day. Some children will want you to tell the whole story again.

There are several things you can use to help tell a story:

•story or picture books
•puppets
•homemade television set
•flannelboard
•some items mentioned in the story

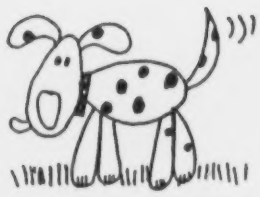
These visuals can make the story more interesting to the child. Try using one as you tell a story.

STORY AND PICTURE BOOKS

Preschoolers enjoy books that are small and easy to handle. Books with only one story are best. The pictures should be large and colorful with not too much detail. Three or four lines of story on each page are about right. Preschoolers enjoy books that let them turn from one page to the next quickly.

Rather than buying a book, try making a simple cardboard one. Select pictures from magazines and paste them on heavy cardboard, or draw your own pictures. Punch holes in each page and tie the pages together with a shoestring, yarn or other heavy cord. Have the preschooler tell you a story about each picture in the cardboard book.

You may want to let the preschooler create a book. Have the child tell you a story. On each page of the book write one sentence of that story. Then let the child draw a picture to go with each sentence. Here is an example:



I have a dog and
his name is Skipper,

He has a bone that
he likes to chew.

He has a house where
he sleeps at night.

My dog likes me
and I like him too.

**Puppets**

Puppets may be made from a variety of inexpensive or leftover materials. They should be bright and colorful so children will find them attractive.

There are two types of puppets:
— hand puppets, and
— puppets on a string.

Choose the type that will help you tell the story best.

The three middle fingers form the main part of a HAND PUPPET. The little finger and thumb operate its arms.

1.Use two pieces of plain material of the same size.

2.Lay the two pieces together and place your hand on them with your three middle fingers together and your little finger and thumb spread.

3.Draw a line around the little finger and thumb for the arms. Be sure to allow enough room so your fingers can operate the puppet easily.

4.Cut out the puppet and sew the two pieces of material together.

5.Decorate the puppet to fit the character in the story.

PAPER BAG PUPPETS are easy to make:

1.Lightly sketch a face on the paper bag, leaving enough space at the bottom so you can tie the bag on the wrist.

2.Color or paint the facial features.

3.If your puppet needs a hat or some hair, make these separately and attach to the top of the bag.

SOCK PUPPETS can be made from old socks:

1.Stuff the end of the sock to form the shape of the head.

2.Tie a piece of string or yarn around the sock below the head.

3.Decorate to make your character.

With a little practice you can operate a PUPPET ON A STRING when you are telling a story. Make a puppet with many moveable joints, tying a string to each joint. Attach the other end of the strings to small sticks that you will use to operate the puppet.

You may want a stage for a puppet show. Practice using the puppet in front of a mirror while you are telling the story. Then you can see how well you operate the puppet and where you need more practice.

## Homemade Television

Select a cardboard box for the television set. Use one that has flaps on top so you can open and close the set when you are changing "TV scripts." The box will be more attractive if you paint or paper the outside.

1.Cut out one side of the box, leaving about two inches around the edge for a frame. The child will see the story pictures you make through this side.

2.Make two rollers from an old broom handle or other round sticks. Each roller should be as long as the front of the "TV" plus six inches (so three inches will extend on each side).

3.Cut two holes in each side of the box near the top and bottom edges and insert the rollers in the holes.

4.Cut a piece of plain wrapping paper or freezer paper about one inch narrower than the front of the TV set. Make the strip as long as you want the show to be. Leave enough paper on each end of the strip so you can attach it to the rollers.

5.Draw or paste colored pictures on the strip.

6.Attach the bottom end of the strip (which has the last picture of the show on it) to the bottom roller. (Be sure your pictures face the outside of the television set.)

7.Roll the strip onto the bottom roller until the first picture is on the screen.

8.Attach the top end of the strip to the top roller.

9.Your "television set" is ready to use. Turn the top roller as you tell the story.



## Finger Plays and Action Songs

Finger plays help the preschooler develop body coordination while learning to recite a simple verse.

Go through the motions as you say the words. Speak clearly and slowly at first so the child can pick up the actions and words. After a while, the child will recite the words and go through the actions alone.

Here are some finger plays a preschooler might enjoy:

### GRANDMOTHER'S GLASSES

These are grandmother's glasses (put fingers in circles over eyes)
This is grandmother's cap, (put hands over head like a bonnet)
This is the way she folds her hands, (fold hands)
And lays them in her lap. (lay hands on lap)

These are grandfather's glasses (make large circles over eyes)
This is grandfather's hat, (large hat)
This is the way he folds his arms (fold arms)
Just like that!

### THE LITTLE TURTLE

There was a little turtle who lived in a box, (cup hands, palms together)
He swam in the puddles and climbed on the rocks, (swim and climb)
He snapped at the mosquito and snapped at the flea, (snap)
He snapped at the minnow and he snapped at me. (snap)
He caught the mosquito and he caught the flea, (close hand)
He caught the minnow, but he didn't catch me.

**Music**

Whether they have musical talent or not, preschoolers enjoy singing. By the age of 4 and 5, many of them can
— sing simple melodies,
— beat rhythms, and
— recognize simple tunes.

If they don't know all the words to the song, they will make up their own.

Preschoolers pick up many songs from children's television shows or commercials.

Children also enjoy making up their own songs. They may make a tune to go with "This is how I wash my face," or "Now I am very sleepy."

When you are around a preschooler, hum or sing simple songs you know. A child often is able to pick up most of the tune by listening to you. Later you can teach the whole song.

Preschoolers like songs that have simple actions and motions to go with the words.

Children's records or tapes and musical games also help teach new songs. "London Bridge" and "Farmer in the Dell" are examples of musical games.

Musical instruments — such as a drum, xylophone, harmonica, trumpet or guitar — also entertain preschoolers. By age 5, they can pick out tunes and play a few familiar, simple melodies on the piano.

**Creative Art and Play**

Preschool children want to use their hands to be creative and imaginative. Although much of their art may not be recognizable to you, it means a lot to the child who created it.

To let the child use his or her creative talents freely, avoid making patterns to follow. The child will probably feel unable to do as well as your pattern and become discouraged.

In creative art, preschoolers are not too concerned about what the art will look like when it is finished. They are interested mainly in the fun and excitement of doing it.

Because some creative art and play, such as painting and water play, may be messy, you need to protect a preschooler's clothes. You can make a simple plastic apron for this purpose:

1.Use a piece of plastic or washable fabric about 18 inches wide by 45 inches long.

2.In the center of the piece, cut an oval hole for the child's head. Be sure the child's head will slip in and out.

3.Bind the hole and the outside edges of the apron with bias tape. Use the long stitch on the sewing machine if you are stitching on plastic or a regular length stitch if you are using fabric.

Finger Painting

Children enjoy finger painting because they can put their hands in the paint.

White butcher paper (or freezer paper) is excellent for finger painting. You also may use shelf paper.

Dip the paper in water or dampen it with a sponge. Lay the paper on the table, pressing out any air bubbles caught between the table and the paper. Be sure the paper is large enough for the child to move his or her hands freely.

Here are some recipes for finger paints:

Finger Paint

3/4 cup liquid laundry starch
1 quart boiling water
1 1/2 cups soap flakes
food coloring
cold water

Mix starch with a little cold water. Mix in soap flakes. Pour the mixture slowly into 1 quart of rapidly boiling water. Turn burner off. Stir constantly

until mixture thickens, then stir occasionally as it cools.

When cool, pour a small amount of mixture into several small containers. Add a different food coloring to each container and mix well.

Instant Finger Paint

Sift or shake non-toxic dry powder (wheat paste) into cold water. Beat as you add powder until it is thick enough for a finger paint. Add food coloring or powdered tempera paint for color. This paint may thicken as it stands.

Easy Finger Paint

Pour a little liquid laundry starch onto moistened paper. Shake or sprinkle food coloring or tempera paint over the starch. Children will enjoy mixing the ingredients as they paint.

Play Dough

2 cups water
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1/2 cup salt
2 cups flour
2 tablespoons powdered alum
food coloring

Mix water and salt in a pan. Bring to a boil and boil until salt is dissolved. Remove from heat. Add alum, vegetable oil and flour. Stir until dough is stiff. Cool.

When cool enough to handle, turn onto a flat surface. Divide into four equal parts. Add a few drops of food coloring to each part and knead until dough is smooth and coloring is evenly distributed. (Children enjoy helping with this part!)

Store in tightly covered containers.

Blowing Bubbles

A child is fascinated with bubbles. Preschoolers are even more fascinated when they can make and pop their own bubbles. To make your own bubble solution, combine 1 cup water and 1 tablespoon liquid dishwashing detergent. Mix well.

Children can blow bubbles through a pipe, a funnel, empty spools, a drinking straw, or through a circle made by their thumb and forefinger.

**Toys for the Preschooler**

You will find many toys in a preschooler's toy box. Each toy is used in a variety of ways. Check preschoolers' toys carefully for safety hazards.

A good toy for a preschooler is one that:

- is simple enough for the children to understand
- has no parts that can be put in the mouth and accidentally swallowed
- is brightly colored.
- has no sharp edges and points
- is not poisonous when licked or sucked (Some paints are poisonous.)
- has moving parts
- will help a child grow by
  - teaching something new
  - helping develop skills and coordination
  - satisfying urges to squeeze, cuddle and love
  - allowing the child to use imagination

Preschoolers enjoy toys such as:

- pedal toys
- swings, climbing bars, gym sets
- pull-apart, put-together toys
- skill games
- housekeeping equipment
- "pretend" costumes
- puzzles, simple games
- wagons, sleds, wheelbarrows
- woodworking equipment (hammers, large nails, soft wood, play saw)
- farm animals, tractors, trucks, barns, fences, etc.
- dolls and stuffed animals

Homemade Toys

Choose a toy you would like to make for a preschooler. Be sure the toy you select meets the requirements of a good toy for a preschooler. Some toys you could make are:

Drop Box

Children enjoy learning about colors and shapes. A drop box is a simple educational toy that is easy to make.

Educational toys for preschoolers should be simple and teach only one main idea at a time. Decide what you want the child to learn. If you want to teach about colors, make all the cardboard pieces the same shape. If you want to teach about shapes, make all the pieces the same color. When a child is about 5 years old, you may begin using limited combinations of colors and shapes.

1.Make a 7- to 9-inch slit in the top of a small box. (A shoe box will work.)

2.Paint or cover the box with contact paper. Use a bright color.

3.Use 4- to 6-inch squares of cardboard to cut out various shapes. Some simple shapes are:
circle, square, triangle, star, half-moon, diamond, apple, pear, leaf, oval.
**or**

Use 4- to-6-inch squares of cardboard and color, paint or cover them with contact paper in different colors. Use simple colors such as:
black, white, red, green, purple, yellow, blue, orange, brown.

4.For preschoolers 5 years of age and older, the numbers 0 through 9 or letters of the alphabet may be used in the drop box. Use only a few numbers or letters at a time until the child begins to identify them correctly. Add more as the child progresses. When using letters, use large block letters rather than small letters (A,B,C,D rather than a,b,c,d).

To use the drop box, give the child one cardboard piece at a time. Ask what color, shape, number or letter it is. (Do not mix these all together. Concentrate on one thing at a time.) With each correct answer, let the child drop the piece through the slit into the box. If the answer is wrong, give the correct answer and lay that piece aside. Use it again after you have shown the child three or four other pieces.

When all the pieces have been correctly identified and put into the box, or when the child tires of the game, let the child take the lid off and see the pieces that were correctly identified.

Stuffed Animals or Dolls

1.Choose colorful pieces of washable material for the parts of the animal or doll.

2.Use your imagination and make your own pattern, or select a ready to use pattern.

3.Pin the pattern on the material.

4.Cut out pieces, allowing 5/8 inch for seam allowances.

5.Sew the main parts together, leaving an opening so you can stuff the filling into place. It is a good idea to stitch the seams twice so they'll be less likely to split open when you put in the stuffing.

6.Choose a filling that will not be harmful to the preschooler if the seam does split open. Pieces of nylons or polyester fiber fill make excellent fillings. The filling must be washable.

7.Sew on the eyes, nose, mouth, and other decorations using fancy embroidery stitches. Choose stitches that will not come apart or be easily pulled. Avoid buttons, hooks, eyes and other small items that a preschooler might accidentally swallow.

Doll Clothes and Bedding

Children like to dress up their dolls and make up the doll's crib. Select patterns from pattern books, or use your imagination and design your own patterns. Try the garment on the doll as you are making it. Then you know it will fit properly.

Make the garment easy for the preschooler to put on and take off the doll. Use simple fasteners such as snaps and ties. Make the armholes large enough for the doll's arms to go through easily.

Make the clothing colorful and sturdy.



Ring Toss

1.Attach a 1-inch dowel rod to a square piece of wood for the base. The dowel should be about 6 inches long and the wood base about 8 inches square.

2.Make rings by winding two or three thicknesses of clothesline cord together and tying them in three places with a heavy, strong cord. You will need about three feet of cord for each ring. Painted embroidery hoops or jar rings also may be used.

3.Let the child decide the rules for this game. This is a good game for two or more children.

NOTE: When painting any toy you make, be sure you select a non-toxic paint. Beware of paints that contain lead, antimony, arsenic, selenium, soluble barium, mercury or cadmium. These materials are poisonous.

Toy Furniture

Toy furniture can be used for many of a child's activities. If you would like to make a piece of furniture for a preschooler, look at how big the child is. Here are some measurements you might need:

- For a chair, measure from the knee to the floor and also from the knee to the lower end of the child's spine. (Make this last measurement when the child is sitting down.)

- For cupboards, sinks, stoves and small dressers, measure from the floor to the child's waist.

- Cradles and beds may be any size, as long as the child's dolls fit into them.

When making toy furniture, use heavier materials such as wood to make chairs and other items that will need to hold the child's weight. You can

make a stove, refrigerator or sink from cardboard boxes. Use markers or tempera paint to add details such as doors and knobs on the furniture you make.

Be sure furniture is safe for preschoolers to use:

•Is wood sanded until all surfaces are smooth and splinter free?

•Are edges of wood sanded until they are well-rounded?

•If paint is used, is it a non-toxic paint?

•If cardboard is used, is it sturdy enough for the preschooler's play?

•Have loose staples or other possible hazards been removed from cardboard?

These are some suggestions for toys for preschoolers. Use your imagination and come up with ideas of your own.

When you have finished the toy, evaluate it using "Guidelines for Evaluating Toys" found at the back of this manual. If your toy meets the requirements, then you may let a preschooler play with it.

**Let's Play a Game**

Young children usually enjoy playing alone and may not like to share playthings with other children. At about 4 or 5 years old, children become interested in neighborhood games that a number of children can play together.

Five-year-olds also enjoy games that test their skills. They will try walking on curbs, jumping rope, skipping and climbing the jungle gym.

Games that preschoolers learn are simple and brief. They have few rules, which are usually made up or changed as the game progresses. One good example is "cops and robbers."

When teaching a game to preschoolers, give directions as you play. Don't worry if some children seem to be breaking the rules — unless this interrupts the game. Just having fun is the most important thing.

Try teaching one of these games to a group of three or four preschoolers:

•Nice Doggie

All children sit in a circle. The one who is "it" is the doggie. The doggie goes on hands and knees to the other children and tries to get one to laugh by barking and making funny noises. The other child then says "nice doggie" without laughing. When the dog succeeds in getting someone to laugh, that person becomes "it."

•Hot Potato

Players sit in a circle and one child is chosen as a leader. An object such as a small potato, ball, stone or piece of wood is passed around the circle. Players must pass the object very quickly, and everyone must accept it when it comes to them. When the leader yells "hot," the child holding the "potato" is out.

The game is played over and over until every child but one is out. The last player is the winner.

•Dog, Your Bone Is Gone

One child is chosen to be a dog. The dog sits in the center or in front of the room with eyes covered, pretending to be asleep. A bone (eraser, rubber bone or other toy) lies beside the dog.

The leader points to a child who is to get the "bone." The child tiptoes up as quietly as possible, picks up the bone and sits down again, hiding the "bone."

Everyone places hands behind their backs, and the group shouts, "Dog, dog, your bone is gone." Dog tries to guess who took the bone. The child who took the bone becomes the next dog.

•Basket Ball

Children stand in a circle and take turns trying to throw a ball into a basket in the center of the circle. Children shout, "Basket" each time the ball goes in.

# FOR MORE HELP WITH YOUR PROJECT

- Ask your parents
- Ask your 4-H leader
- Read the 4-H manual for The Sitter project
- Refer to the following Fact Sheets: (They are available at your Extension office.)

FL21 How Young Children Learn
FL23 The Preschool Years — Three to Five
FL26 The Three-Year-Old
FL27 The Four-Year-Old
FL28 The Five-Year-Old
FL40 Toys and Play for Young Children
FL52 Self-Esteem: Our Gift to Children
FL80 Read to Your Child

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Materials were adapted from those prepared by the North Dakota State University Extension Service.

# GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING TOYS

| Superior | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |

**Originality & Safety**

Creating and constructing imaginative toys can be an opportunity for you to express your knowledge and CREATIVITY.

1. Shows evidence of originality in design.
2. Exhibits unique use of available and inexpensive materials.
3. Is a creative adaption of an existing idea.

| Superior | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |

**Safety**

Toy should be designed so that the child can use the toy safely.

1. Is free of sharp or pointed edges.
2. Has been put together so that there are no exposed straight pins, sharp wires, rails, etc.
3. Is made of a material other than glass or brittle plastic.
4. Non-toxic paint has been used on toy.
5. Is free of parts which deliberately pinch fingers or toes, or catch hair.
6. Is free of small detachable parts that can lodge in the windpipe, ears or nostrils.
7. Is of a material which would be difficult to bite into and/or swallow.
8. Cord or string is no longer than 12" in length.

| Superior | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |

**Appropriate for the Child's Age & Development Skills**

Toys are the child's tools for learning and are part of a rich learning environment. Toys should be appropriate and usable at each age level.

1. Attracts the child's attention and interest.
2. Stimulates the sense (color, texture, shape).
3. Enhances intellectual development.
4. Is a versatile toy—can be used in a variety of ways.

# GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING TOYS

**Promotes Growth & Development**

Toy should be age specific.

1. Can be used by the child when playing alone as well as with another person.
2. Encourages interaction between the child and other people.
3. Helps in developing large muscle skills (example: running, walking, sitting on).
4. Promotes the development of small muscle coordination (example: dressing, drawing, lacing).

| Superior | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |

**Quality of Construction**

The toy should be able to withstand the rigors of child use.

1. Is durable.
2. Buttons, trims, and other parts are well-fitted and securely fastened.
3. Sewing is well done and secure.
4. Is washable.
5. Has been carefully and attractively constructed.
6. Rough edges and corners are smooth.

| Superior | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |

**Completeness of Exhibit**

Statement about toy should contain the following components:

1. How the toy/game will be used by the child.
2. Materials from which toy is made.
3. Statement about washability.
4. Description of the type of paint used.
5. Skills the child will develop from playing with this toy.
6. Origin of the idea. (Identify if made from a kit or pattern.)
7. If the exhibit is a game, include instructions.

| Superior | Excellent | Good | Fair | Poor |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |

# SUMMARY OF PROJECT

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Nebraska Cooperative Extension 4-H 327

## 4-H CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

# LEADER'S GUIDE

## FOR THE PRESCHOOLER AND MIDDLE CHILDHOOD UNITS

**Connie M. Francis**
**Extension Family Life Specialist**

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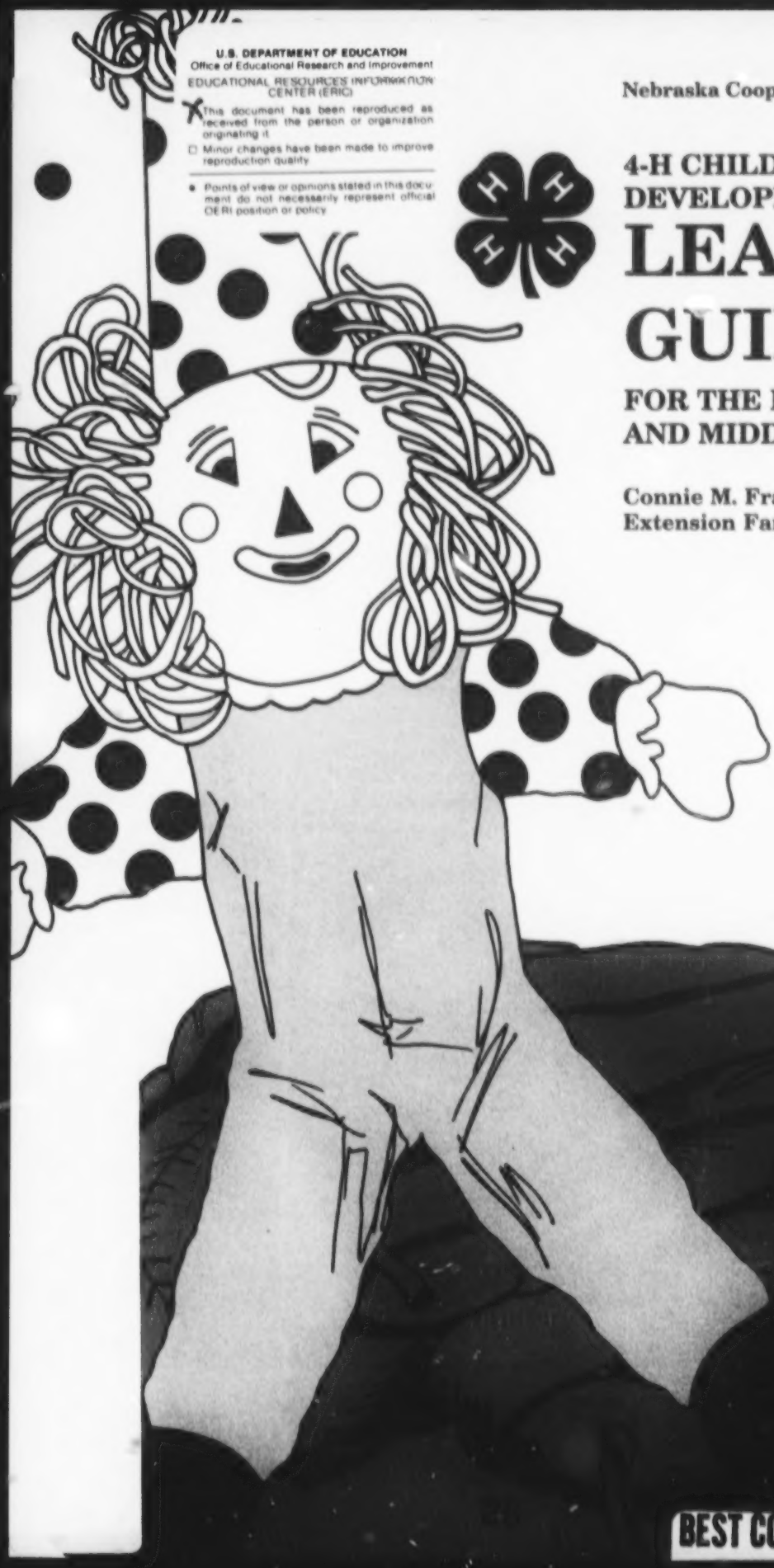

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# 4-H CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS LEADER'S GUIDE for the PRESCHOOLER AND MIDDLE CHILDHOOD UNITS

**Connie M. Francis**
**Extension Family Life Specialist**

## INTRODUCTION

The 4-H Child Development project is written as four separate units:

**The Infant (birth to 18 months)**

**The Toddler (18 months to 3 years)**

**The Preschooler (3 to 6 years)**

**Middle Childhood (6 to 8 years)**

Each unit teaches about the physical, emotional, social and intellectual growth of a particular age group. Four-H'ers do not have to begin with the infant unit and proceed through the units in order. They may choose to begin with any unit they wish.

The goals of the 4-H Child Development Project are:

- To understand how children grow physically, mentally, socially and emotionally from infancy through middle childhood.
- To learn how to care for children from birth through 8 years.
- To choose appropriate types of play for each age level.

Your role as a leader is to help 4-H'ers meet these goals.

This Leader's Guide is designed as a tool for you. It will help you plan learning experiences for 4-H'ers studying "The Preschooler" (3 to 6 years) or "Middle Childhood" (6 to 8 years) in the 4-H Child Development Project.

As you read the member's manual, you will get ideas for learning activities and experiences that will help 4-H'ers gain an understanding of the developmental levels through which children grow. One of the best learning experiences a 4-H'er can have in this project is to observe more than one child of similar ages. This helps the 4-H'er realize that, although there are levels through which all children progress, each is unique and each proceeds at his or her own individual rate. Children who are mentally, emotionally or physically handicapped will progress at a slower rate in some areas.

Encourage 4-H'ers to discuss project plans with their parents and involve them in the project. You, as the Child Development project leader, can involve parents in many ways, too. For example, they can have meetings in their homes, be involved in teaching, help with transportation for a field trip, etc. Parents may have talents to share that can help 4-H'ers learn more from this project.

The 4-H Leader Handbook (4-H 38) is a guide to help leaders work with young people and to link them to the community and to the Extension Office in their area. In the handbook, there is information on understanding 4-H, involving parents in 4-H, holding effective meetings, understanding youth and helping 4-H'ers with project records. Refer to the 4-H Leader Handbook for areas in which you would like help.

# WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Most young people within an age group have some of the general characteristics typical of the age and developmental stage. However, each child develops at his or her own pace and each is a unique individual. Below are typical characteristics of two age groups with which you will be working. You are likely to observe many of these characteristics in your 4-H members, but you will not find all of them in any one member.

**Characteristics of 9- to 11-year-olds:**

- Interest in making things is high.
- Large muscle control is fairly well developed.
- Fine finger control is beginning to develop.
- Peer group is of increasing importance.
- Independence from adults is important.
- Have limited decision making abilities.
- Have abounding energy.
- Find it hard to sit still for very long.
- Need to experience early success.
- Need to feel loved and accepted.
- Attention span is good for short periods of time.
- Active participation increases attention span.
- Searching for self-identity and need assistance in building a strong sense of positive personal confidence.
- Need help managing their time.

**Characteristics of 12- to 14-year-olds:**

- Steady height and weight growth continues.
- Small muscle control is fairly well developed.
- Abstract thought is possible, and plans can extend over several weeks.
- Activities can be evaluated with considerable insight.
- Attention span increases.
- Need self-expression and self-directed activities to develop intellectual skills.
- Need to know and understand the "why" of things.
- Peer group is very important.
- Prejudice may be apparent.
- Both cooperation and competition are enjoyed. Cooperation is more difficult to learn than is competition.
- Independence from adults is important.
- Concept of self is enhanced by feelings of competence.

# RESPONSIBILITY OF THE 4-H LEADER

1.Attend leader training meetings when possible to receive information on teaching 4-H'ers.

2.Plan meetings for project members.

3.Explain what the project can offer. Encourage 4-H'ers to pursue areas of individual interest and share their findings with others.

4.Help individuals evaluate their projects.

5.Encourage participation in presentations and exhibits to gain poise and confidence.

6.Learn and grow with the members. Broaden your own knowledge in child development.

7.Ask your Extension Agent-Home Economics for help in getting bulletins and other materials and resources listed in this guide.

# A 4-H PHILOSOPHY

Much of the 4-H program centers around one major learning technique - the project. A project is a real-life learning experience through which the 4-H member establishes personal objectives, sets out to accomplish these objectives under adult guidance, and actually finishes the job. Projects help members learn by doing and are planned to teach life skills. These skills will help 4-H'ers function as adults in our society and accept responsibilities for community leadership.

Life skills help young people and adults fulfill their potential as individuals and group members. The life skills learned in 4-H include:

- understanding self,
- relating with others,
- communicating,
- decision making/problem solving,
- acquiring, analyzing and using information,
- managing resources, and
- working with others.

In the 4-H Child Development project, 4-H'ers will learn and practice these life skills. As a leader, you can encourage 4-H'ers to talk about and share what they observe and do, both formally and informally. Urge them to experiment, ask questions and try new things. Give them opportunities to identify problems and attempt solutions, to set goals and make choices, and to evaluate what they have learned. In this way, you will help them develop life skills which will be useful to them long after they have completed this project.

# PLANNING THE PROJECT MEETING

On the following pages are suggested activities for club meetings. It is not necessary to complete all the activities and exercises. Select the ones that interest you and your club members the most. You will have additional ideas of your own, as well.

Get members involved early in the meeting through roll call, reports of what they have done since the last meeting, simple demonstrations, short talks and actual activities. Provide some opportunity for recognition of and participation by every member at each meeting.

Field trips add variety to a club program. For the convenience of everyone concerned, make arrangements for trips well in advance. Talk to the person in charge about what you want members to learn and see, their interest and age range, the time of your arrival and departure, and anything else that will make the visit worthwhile for 4-H'ers and pleasant for the host.

Involve Junior Leaders as well as 4-H parents in club meetings. Ask them to demonstrate a skill, assist with a group activity or help individual 4-H'ers.

Take some time at your first meeting to organize. Introduce the project to members and their parents. Explain the project and, if possible, give examples of what is included in some of the units. Discuss keeping a journal to record project experiences and observations.

# THE PRESCHOOLER

This unit of the Child Development project is about the development of preschoolers from 3 to 6 years. In it the 4-H'er will observe and learn about the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of preschoolers. It is important to remind members that each child is unique and will progress through these stages at an individual rate. Ages given for various stages of development and accomplishment are approximate ages.

For more information about the development and care of preschoolers, refer to the following Fact Sheets available at your Extension office:

- FL21 How Young Children Learn
- FL23 The Preschool Years - Three to Five
- FL26 The Three-Year-Old
- FL27 The Four-Year-Old
- FL28 The Five-Year-Old
- FL40 Toys and Play for Young Children
- FL52 Self-Esteem: Our Gift to Children
- FL80 Read to Your Child

The following 4-H publications also may be useful:

- 4-H 181 Communicating with Young Children
- 4-H 267 The Sitter, Member Manual
- 4-H 268 The Sitter, Leader Guide

The amount of responsibility a 4-H'er takes for actual care of a child in this project depends on the 4-H'er's age and experience. **The member's manual has project suggestions for members in three age groups: 9 to 11 years old, 12 to 14 years old, and 15 to 19 years old.**

# UNDERSTANDING THE PRESCHOOLER

Purpose: 4-H'ers will learn how a preschooler grows physically, mentally, socially and emotionally.

**Meeting Suggestions:** (This section may involve two or three meetings.)

**Roll Call Ideas:**

- Why I have chosen to study preschoolers.
- An experience I have had with a preschooler.
- One thing I know about preschoolers.
- Ask each member to bring a picture of themselves as a preschooler.

**Topics to Talk About:**

•Characteristics of preschoolers. Review "I Am A Preschooler," page 8 in the member manual. Explain to 4-H'ers that developmental materials are generalized information to help us see the various stages through which a child moves. It is important to realize that each child develops at his or her own pace.

•Observing preschoolers. Refer to the Observation Form on page 6 in the member manual and discuss skills preschoolers learn in each area: physical, social, intellectual and emotional. Encourage members to observe as many preschoolers as possible during this project.

•Keeping a journal. Encourage members to keep a Child Development journal in which they record their observations. A loose-leaf notebook would allow 4-H'ers to duplicate the Observation Form and make several observations throughout their project. This journal also may include a record of other experiences in the project as well as pictures and newspaper or magazine articles about the development and care of preschoolers.

**Activities:**

•Use project suggestions on page 4 of the member manual. Discuss what each member would like to learn and do. Complete the first column of the Project Planning and Evaluation Sheet together (page 2, member manual).

•Make a journal entry as a group. In it record your plans for the project year.

•Using the Observation Form provided on page 6 of the member manual, have members record:

— changes in one preschooler over a period of time.

— differences between two or more preschoolers of approximately the same age.

Have members include these observations in their journal.

•Visit a local day care center or preschool where 4-H'ers can observe more than one preschooler. Each member could select two children of the same approximate age and note similarities and differences in physical, emotional, intellectual and social development. Have members record what they see on Observation Forms. Encourage 4-H'ers to ask questions of the day care provider or preschool director. (You may want to have members prepare a list of questions together ahead of time.)

•As a group, list some "don'ts" that members have used with preschoolers. Practice restating them as "do" statements.

# CARING FOR THE PRESCHOOLER

Purpose: The 4-H'er will learn how to feed, clothe and care for the preschooler, and how to promote feelings of security and safety.

**Meeting Suggestions:** (This section may involve two or three meetings.)

**Roll Call Ideas:**

- One safety rule for caring for a preschooler.
- A snack idea that preschoolers could fix for themselves.

**Possible Presentations by Members:**

- Nutritional needs of a preschooler.
- Nutritious snacks for preschoolers.
- Clothing for a preschooler.
- Teaching a child to tie shoes.

**Topics to Talk About:**

- Feeding a preschooler. Discuss nutritional needs and how they change as a preschooler grows. Also talk about providing a relaxed atmosphere at mealtime and beginning to learn table manners.
- Clothing a preschooler. Clothing features that make dressing easier for preschoolers.
- Quiet activities that can help prepare a preschooler for nap or bedtime.

**Activities:**

- Invite a guest speaker to attend your 4-H meeting. Before the speaker arrives, develop a list of questions you would like answered. Ideas for guest speakers include:
  — a preschool teacher to talk about the daily schedule and activities at a preschool or running a preschool as a business.
  — someone from your local Head Start to explain the Head Start program.
- Visit a store where preschool clothing is sold. Look at sizes, age ranges and features that would be attractive to preschoolers. Note construction details and care labels.
- As members develop skills in caring for a preschooler, and as they learn through observations and other experiences, encourage them to share what they have learned. This sharing may be done informally, through group discussion, or through formal presentations such as demonstrations, speeches, posters, reports or exhibits.
- As a group, or for an individual assignment, have members plan one day's menus for a preschooler.
- Role-play talking with a preschooler about table manners. Discuss or role-play ways to introduce new foods.
- Gather a variety of clothing fasteners — zippers (large and small), buttons, snaps, hooks, gripper strips, etc. — and discuss which would be easier for a preschooler to manage and how they can be used to make clothing easier for the preschooler to put on and take off alone.

# LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

Purpose: 4-H'ers will learn to choose types of play preschoolers enjoy and toys that are suitable for preschoolers.

**Meeting Suggestions:** (This section may involve two or three meetings.)

**Roll Call Ideas:**

- Your favorite toy as a preschooler.
- Name a toy a preschooler would enjoy.
- A safety tip for playing with a preschooler.
- An idea or picture of a preschooler's toy I could make.

**Possible Member Presentations:**

- Selecting or making a toy for a preschooler.
- Teaching a game or a song to a preschooler.

**Topics to Talk About:**

- Types of play which encourage a preschooler's physical, emotional, social and intellectual development.
- Preschoolers and make-believe. Use the section on Imaginative Play, page 11 in the member manual, as a discussion guide.
- What makes a good toy for a preschooler? Use the section on "Toys for the Preschooler," page 16 in the member manual, as a discussion guide.

**Activities:**

- Collect four or five toys for preschoolers. Ask members to evaluate each toy in regard to quality of construction, safety and appropriateness for use by a preschooler.
- Invite a librarian to attend your meeting and talk about books for preschoolers. The librarian could also share ideas about telling stories.
- Ask each member to bring a short children's book to your meeting and practice telling the story rather than reading it.
- Learn some finger plays and action songs that members can share with their preschool friends. (See page14, member manual.)
- Ask each member to bring supplies needed to make a drop box or other toy for a preschooler. Make the toy at your meeting. You may want to enlist the help of one or two junior leaders or parents.
- Ask members to keep a journal. By observing a child at play a 4-H'er can learn a great deal about what the child is thinking and feeling. Encourage members to write in their journals about what they observe.
- Complete Project Planning and Evaluation Sheet found in the front of the member manual. Encourage members to record what they learned and comments about each activity.

# AN ACHIEVEMENT MEETING

If possible, share the achievements of the members in this project at a final club "achievement" meeting. This would be an ideal time to invite families to learn about what members have done.

An achievement meeting could include an exhibit of members' work, displays or posters showing things learned, presentations by members, and sharing of observations about the growth and development of preschoolers.

# MIDDLE CHILDHOOD

This unit includes information about development in middle childhood. In it 4-H'ers will observe and learn about the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of 6- to 8-year-olds. It is important to remind members that each child is unique and will progress through these stages at an individual rate. Ages given for various stages of development and accomplishment are approximate.

Erik Erikson*, who studied human development, believed that people learn certain lessons and gain certain skills according to their age and stage of growth. He divided the average lifetime into eight stages and suggested eight major lessons to go with each of these stages. The lesson he identified for middle childhood was industry versus inferiority.

Erikson believed that children in middle childhood are learning about the value of work and about the confidence they gain when they know they have done a job well (industry). He also believed that children who don't feel good about their accomplishments or who never learn to finish projects or jobs won't feel good about themselves (inferiority). He stated that children's main needs during these years are for achievement, acceptance by friends and important adults, and a sense of self-esteem.

Children 6, 7 and 8 years old, he said, are at the beginning of this stage and are excited about doing. acting, exploring, daring, experimenting, inventing, building and completing their projects. Duties at home, school assignments and other projects provide children with opportunities to commit to tasks. Successful completion of these tasks helps them feel good about themselves.

For more information about the development and care of children in middle childhood, refer to the following Fact Sheets that are available at your Extension office:

- FL24 When Your Child Starts School
- FL45 Your Child From Six to Twelve
- FL52 Self-Esteem: Our Gift to Children
- FL80 Read to Your Child

The following 4-H publications also may be useful:

- 4-H 181 Communicating with Young Children
- 4-H 267 The Sitter, Member Manual
- 4-H 268 The Sitter, Leader Guide

The amount of responsibility a 4-H'er takes for actual care of a child in this project depends on the 4-H'er's age and experience. The member's manual has project suggestions for members in three age groups: 9 to 11 years old, 12 to 14 years old, and 15 to 19 years old.

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*Sue Bredekamp, ed., DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS SERVING CHILDREN FROM BIRTH THROUGH AGE 8 (Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1988), pp 64-65.

# UNDERSTANDING MIDDLE CHILDHOOD

Purpose: 4-H'ers will learn how children grow physically, intellectually, socially and emotionally during middle childhood.

**Meeting Suggestions:** (This section may involve two or three meetings.)

**Roll Call Ideas:**

- Why I have chosen to study middle childhood.
- Ask each member to bring a picture of themselves in middle childhood.
- Name a 6- to 8-year-old you know and tell something about him or her.

**Topics to Talk About:**

•Characteristics of children in middle childhood. Review "I Am In Middle Childhood," page 7 in the member manual. Tell 4-H'ers that developmental materials are generalized information to help us see the various stages through which a child moves. It is important to realize that each child develops at his or her own pace.

•Observing middle childhood-age children. Refer to the Observation Form on page 6 of the member manual and discuss the skills learned in middle childhood in each area: physical, social, intellectual and emotional. Encourage members to observe as many children in middle childhood as possible during this project.

•Keeping a journal. Encourage members to keep a Child Development journal in which they record their observations. A loose-leaf notebook would allow 4-H'ers to duplicate the Observation Form and make several observations throughout their project. This journal also may include a record of other experiences in the project as well as pictures and newspaper or magazine articles about the development and care of children in middle childhood.

**Activities:**

•Use project suggestions on page 4 of the member manual. Discuss what each member would like to learn and do. Complete the first column of the Project Planning and Evaluation Sheet together (page 2, member manual).

•Make a journal entry as a group. Record your plans for the project year.

•Record observations. Duplicate the Observation Form provided on page 6 of the member's manual and have members record:

— changes in one child over a period of time.

— differences between two or more children of approximately the same age.

Have members include these observations in their journal.

•Take field trip. Visit a local day care center where 4-H'ers can observe more than one child in middle childhood. Each member could select two children of the same approximate age and note similarities and differences in physical, emotional, mental and social development. Have members record what they see on Observation Forms. Encourage 4-H'ers to ask questions of the day care provider. (You may want to prepare a list of questions together ahead of time.)

# CARING FOR THE CHILD IN MIDDLE CHILDHOOD

Purpose: The 4-H'er will learn skills to encourage the 6- to 8-year-old child's physical, emotional, intellectual and social development.

**Meeting Suggestions:** (This section may involve two or three meetings.)

**Roll Call Ideas:**

- A new skill which 6- to 8-year-olds may be learning.
- A play idea for 6- to 8-year-olds.

**Possible Member Presentations:**

- Nutritional needs in middle childhood.
- Simple snacks to make with 6- to 8-year-olds.
- Activities to encourage thinking skills.

**Topics to Talk About:**

- How children change physically during middle childhood. Discuss skills that are developing at this age.
- Thinking skills that develop in middle childhood. Share ways to encourage development of these skills.
- Changes that take place in relating to others during middle childhood. Discuss methods that help 6- to 8-year-olds develop social skills.
- Discuss emotional development in middle childhood and ways in which 4-H'ers can encourage emotional growth in children with whom they associate.
- Discuss handicapping conditions, how they affect a 6- to 8-year-old and how 4-H'ers can encourage a handicapped child.

**Activities:**

- Invite a guest speaker to attend your 4-H meeting. Before the speaker arrives, develop a list of questions you would like answered. Ideas for guest speakers include:
  — a teacher who works with 6- to 8-year-olds.
  — a librarian to talk about storytelling and books appropriate for middle childhood.
  — a mother to tell about growth and development of her child in middle childhood.
  — a handicapped adult to share experiences of middle childhood years.
- As members develop skills in caring for a child in middle childhood, and as they learn through observations and other experiences, encourage them to share what they have learned. This sharing may be done informally through group discussion, or through formal presentations such as demonstrations, speeches, reports, posters or exhibits.

# LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

Purpose: 4-H'ers will learn to choose types of play that children in middle childhood enjoy and what toys are suitable for 6- to 8-year-olds.

**Meeting Suggestions:** (This section may involve two or three meetings.)

**Roll Call Ideas:**

- Name a toy that a 6- to 8-year-old would enjoy.
- An idea or picture of a toy I could make in this unit.
- Share an action song I know.

**Possible Member Presentations:**

- Selecting or making a toy for a 6- to 8-year-old.
- What I have learned as I have observed 6- to 8-year-olds.

**Topics to Talk About:**

- Types of play that encourage physical, emotional, social and intellectual development in middle childhood.
- Articles that might be included in a "care kit" for children in middle childhood.

**Activities:**

- Collect four or five toys for children in middle childhood. Ask members to evaluate each toy for quality of construction, safety, appropriateness for middle childhood, and how well it would encourage imaginative play.
- Visit a store where toys are sold. Compare toys suggested for 6- to 8-year-olds with what members have learned about skill level of this age group. Ask members to write a report about what they learned.
- Keep a journal. By observing a child's imaginative play a 4-H'er can learn a great deal about what the child is thinking and feeling. Encourage members to write in their journals about what they observe.
- Complete the Project Planning and Evaluation Sheet found at the front of the member manual. Encourage members to record what they have learned and comment about each activity.

# AN ACHIEVEMENT MEETING

If possible, share the achievements of the members in this project at a final club "achievement" meeting. This would be an ideal time to invite families to learn about what members have done.

An achievement meeting could include an exhibit of members' work, displays or posters showing things learned, presentations by members, and sharing of observations about the growth and development of children in middle childhood.

# REFERENCES

"4-H Good Times with Early School-Age Children", Leader's Guide, Colorado State University Cooperative Extension

Bredekamp, Sue, ed. DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS SERVING CHILDREN FROM BIRTH THROUGH AGE 8. Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1988.

Savery, Millicent. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR THE 3-, 4-, AND 5-YEAR-OLD CHILD. 2nd rev.ed. Lincoln: Nebraska Department of Education, Division of Instructional Services, 1979.

## A Guide to Children's Toys

Children's rates of growth differ widely, but the sequence of the development is similar. The following guide is not a timetable. It shows a progression in which each new skill adds to and builds on the mastery of the ones before.

| STAGES | EMERGING SKILLS | TOYS THAT ENABLE | WAYS TO ENCOURAGE |
|---|---|---|---|
| ENJOYMENT OF THE FAMILIAR<br>(birth to about 6 months) | recognition of faces<br>anticipation of sequences<br>discovery of own body (hand, mouth and vocal play)<br>staring and listening intently<br>learning they can cause things to happen | stuffed toys with faces<br>reflective surfaces, toys to hold, suck, shake<br>crib decorations, music box<br>mobile that moves as a result of baby moving in bed | make faces<br>ritual games (pat-a-cake)<br>think safety in toys that go in mouth<br>sing/talk to baby<br>react |
| GETTING AROUND<br>(about 6 mo. to 12 mo.) | action—crawling, standing, walking<br>manipulation with hands and mouth<br>sense of self as doer<br>rhythm of absence/presence | things he/she can crawl under, get inside<br>toys for banging, inserting, twisting, pushing pulling, dropping, squeezing, opening, shutting<br>jack-in-box, toys which hide and reveal | gentle rough housing<br>think safety on anything that can go in mouth<br>knee, lap games, tug-o-war<br>peek-a-boo, hear-a-boo |
| EXPLORING<br>(about 1 to 2 years) | mobility—use of body<br>exploration and testing of relationships (objects as well as people)<br>look for something that's gone<br>imitation<br>making decisions—choice<br>language | wheel toys, push/pull toys, ball<br>construction toys for putting together, taking apart, blocks, containers for emptying and filling, things to throw<br>simple, sturdy books and pictures | chase and be chased<br>finger and hand games<br>hide and find things<br>pretend |
| DESIRE FOR MASTERY<br>(about 2 to 3 years) | testing surroundings and physical ability<br>exploration and construction<br>self mastery, desire to do it alone<br>performing<br>pretending<br>sustain play in small groups | pedal toys, punching toys<br>sand and water toys<br>drawing materials, water-soluble paints, block, play dough, pasting, puzzles, threading, lacing<br>puppets, books, records | switch roles<br>act out stories, tell stories<br>be an audience<br>help pretend<br>follow the leader, ring games (around the rosy) |
| MAKE BELIEVE<br>(about 3 to 4 years) | construct toy worlds<br>portray characters with feelings<br>sort and match<br>take turns, play cooperatively, make rules<br>music and rhythm<br>physical exploration | toy house, village, farm, etc.<br>dress up and make believe props for self, toys and dolls<br>blunt scissors, easel, clay<br>records, books on fantasy, familiar places and rhythms<br>simple music and rhythm instruments | participate in make believe<br>hide and seek |
| LEARNING ORDER<br>(about 4 to 5 years) | differentiate order/disorder<br>differentiate inclusion/exclusion<br>desire for courage and adequacy<br>establish play rituals<br>have secrets and surprises<br>act out imaginary characters | tinker toys, lego and other detailed construction toys<br>simple card and board games | provide place to keep toys orderly<br>play games of courage<br>allow some privacy |
| THE DREAMER<br>(about 5 to 7 years) | dream—think of "what if" situations<br>elaborate toy worlds<br>begin collections<br>team play<br>chasing and escaping<br>attack and defense<br>sense of self as separate person | comics and books, paper dolls<br>magnets, compass, magnifying glass<br>simple craft kits—weaving, sewing, construction kits<br>simple tools for clay, etc.<br>rope ladder, skates, stilts<br>two wheel bike | play "what if" games<br>improvise movements, objects, characters, situations, feelings<br>provide safe place to store collection<br>referee |
| ENJOYMENT OF THE ABSURD<br>(about 7 to 9 years) | guessing, riddling<br>develop pastimes—collections, hobbies<br>desire for correctness—no mistakes | card and board games<br>dominoes, checkers<br>mechanical, simple construction tools for woodworking, crafts, etc.<br>jump rope, stilts | play with double meanings<br>indulge nonsense<br>show your skill |
| DESIRE FOR COMPETENCE<br>(about 9 to 13 years) | concern with opinions of others<br>sense of self and feelings as unique<br>concerned with success/failure | intellectual games (scrabble, charades)<br>models<br>diaries, journals, notebooks<br>camping and exploring equipment<br>more complex craft tools | dramatize imaginary interactions, conflicts<br>ask about experiences, feelings<br>encourage creative writing<br>play sports<br>allow privacy |